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I Am Navy Medicine: Hospital Corpsman 1st Class LaToya Stephens

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Hospital Corpsman 1st Class
LaToya Stephens at a battalion
aid station during a field operation
in Camp Pendleton, California.
(Photo provided by Stephens)

When I was younger I dreamed of being a Nurse.

I grew up in Richmond, Virginia and graduated from John F. Kennedy School in 2004. As graduation approached I wasn't sure what exactly I wanted to do as a nurse or in a hospital. I just knew that's where I wanted to be, working hands on with patients.

Toward the end of my senior year, a recruiter knocked on my door. I thought it was rather curious because I had never expressed interest in the military, but I decided to give her a chance. She spoke with me about my aspirations, and the more we talked, I realized I wasn't sure if I was ready to go to college for nursing.

I researched Hospital Corpsmen after meeting with the recruiter, and I was impressed! I decided I would join the Navy only if I could be a Hospital Corpsman, and I would decide if I really wanted to be a nurse after my enlistment.

It's rare that opportunities like that fall into your lap, but needless to say, I am grateful for it and so glad I made the decision to enlist. I have gained invaluable skills as a Hospital Corpsman, and I'm proud to serve with a team of such innovative and selfless individuals I would never have had the opportunity to meet had Navy Medicine not come knocking on my door.

I've been in the Navy serving as a Hospital Corpsman for 11 years now, and I wouldn't change it for the world. I've been stationed around the world, and currently I'm working at the Navy Medicine Professional Development Center in Bethesda, Maryland, not too far from my hometown. My job here ensures that we have the proper personnel to support the command's mission to educate, train, and support medical department personnel to enable readiness, wellness and healthcare to Sailors, Marines, their families and all others entrusted to Navy Medicine, be it on land or sea or on the battlefield.

My experience with Navy Medicine has been a continuous positive evolution, and I look forward to the future advances we will continue to make as an organization and as a team.

I am Hospital Corpsman 1st Class LaToya Stephens, and I am Navy Medicine.